

PROGRAMA C

JUAN CAICEDO

The Invention of the Accident



Photo: Juan Caicedo



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Gallery C

I knew beforehand that I was designing the elements of my own collision.

J.G. Ballard: *Crash*

In *The Museum of Accidents*, a short essay from 1986, Paul Virilio tells us that “the invention of the ship entails the invention of the shipwreck” and that the same applies to the locomotive, the plane and the automobile, always prone to derailing, falling from the sky and crashing. In his text, Virilio calls for a museography that goes beyond presenting the wonders of technological development to reconstruct the continuous horror and fascination with something that never ceases to disappear, not simply to exhibit a past catastrophe but because of the need to expose ourselves—to take ourselves to a place of vulnerability—through the esthetic experience of the exhibition. It is fundamental to the author not that we should die in the accident but rather that we should understand that the collision is not accidental but rather linked to the structure of the invention.

Virilio’s intention is to point to the risk implicit in all technological advancements and thus save us from this siren call we have surrendered ourselves to. However, in his descriptions of space shuttles that crash and buildings that collapse in real time and in a matter of seconds across our television screens, there is an excitement that invites us to submit ourselves completely to the crushing of tin plates, as if his text—a literal call to sanity—had gone off course to crash into a wall at full speed.

It is perhaps this excitement brought on by collisions that is also behind *Crash*, the novel by J.G. Ballard that David Cronenberg made into a movie with great mastery in 1996. In it one of the characters states that the car accident "is an event that is more productive than destructive, interceding in the sexuality of those who have died with a level of intensity that is otherwise impossible." In *Crash* the form of the collision is separate from the accidental; the crash is sought and desired because only through collision does the pleasure of copulation and the fusion of bodies occur. The accident is thereby invented and is infused with the will to create a particular situation in which the threat of death returns to us the voluptuousness of life.

The work of Juan Caicedo (Pasto, 1981) develops by the tension produced at different moments by the possibility, evidence or memory of a collision. At certain moments, Caicedo lays out a series of blunt objects alongside fragile tubes of light resting against a wall, inviting the spectator to terminate the passive aggressiveness of the florescent light. At another moment, a piano hanging over an unavoidable point of passage gives us the chance to be crushed in cartoon fashion and put our resistance to the test, comparing ourselves to any given cartoon character that however flattened would undoubtedly survive the impact of a piano falling from the sky. At times Caicedo lacks patience and takes it upon himself to go after an old piece of furniture with a bat, or decides to make a hole in the wall to gain access to a place that may not be reserved for him, or perhaps to demonstrate the artifice of the forms and opportunities provided by that access. Lastly, the artist may contemplate the wreckage left by the accident and transform it into a landscape, a monument or a re-animated object through mutating combinations of parts that challenge the precision of engineering to give the trick a chance to take its revenge.

The various moments and the forms that the approaches to collision take in this exhibition reveal peculiar geographies of twisted tin plates, reconstructions of vehicles made from the parts of other damaged vehicles and sculptural discrepancies between the new car and the dented one. In *The Invention of the Accident*, Caicedo does not bring us pure ruin or the confirmation of a chance event: rather, his work modernizes the forms of disaster and ways of conceptualizing the disaster that is always coming, that already came and that is to come, impregnated with light.

In a way, Caicedo flirts with the famous philosophy of the hammer in which Nietzsche strived to definitively overcome history and legacy to make way for something new. However, what Caicedo seeks is not the destruction of legacy per se, nor is it the advent of something better and indestructible, but the possibility of accessing states of material and thought that only emerge in cohabitation with ruin and in the proof that there is no overcoming, no cure and no contradiction between the functional and the dismantled object, given that both are simply moments in a material process of understanding the world. For Caicedo the hammer is at once capable of creating a marble statue and of furiously destroying the part of the world that is guarded by the museum and that can now exist without fear or shame in a perpetual limbo lacking all judgment, under the perplexed gaze of spectators who are always too late or too early to contemplate the destruction of the world and the creation of art.

Disaster, catastrophe and collision are forms of relationships that “emerge when an organism slams into the world in productive agreement with it,” according to Kurt Goldstein, who concludes that “the clash, so to speak, provides only a shake up from which the repatterning, that is, the real pattern, the real performance, the revelation of the organism and the world, emerges.” This is a world against which Caicedo is forever inviting us to crash because the impact sculpts us and gives shape to what we will be. Better yet, it scolds us for not yet having crashed, for being intact, for not having been deformed or reformed by those impacts that we have not been subject to even though they proliferate in place after place—where something is invented, where bodies come together, where others move rapidly forward without thinking because thinking about the impact is only possible during the experience of being hit by something and not while contemplating the crack, wound or wreckage. We have invented the accident to reinvent ourselves, but we continue to be unharmed in a world that is nothing but collision.

Víctor Albarracín Llanos / Curator

Juan Caicedo (Pasto, 1981)

Bachelor of Arts from the National University of Colombia. He holds a master's in public art and new artistic strategies from Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany. He is an assistant professor at the National University of Colombia in Medellín and has participated in exhibits in Colombia, Germany, France, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Kingdom. In 2009 he was awarded a grant from the Alcaldía de Medellín in the category of installation, and in 2016 he received a special mention from the National Biennial of Architecture for his participation in the design of the Remanso de Paz Cultural Center in Turbo, Antioquia. He lives and works in Medellín.

Víctor Albarracín Llanos (Neiva, 1974)

Albarracín Llanos is the artistic director of Lugar a dudas, located in Cali, and cofounder and member of artist centers including El Bodegón (Bogotá, 2005–2009), Selecto–Planta Baja (Los Angeles, 2014–2015) and La Parte Maldita, an occasional space for curatorial projects and publications that has been in operation since 2010. As an artist he has had individual and collective exhibits in SIART (La Paz, Bolivia), Galería Las Edades (Bogotá), Valenzuela Klenner (Bogotá), Museo La Tertulia (Cali), the Bogotá Museum of Modern Art, FIART (Madrid), Kunsthalle Fredericianum (Kassel, Germany), Or Gallery (Vancouver) and Espacio la Rebeca (Bogotá), among others. In 2009 he was awarded the National Critics Award for his essay "*Antagonismo y fracaso: la historia de un espacio de artistas en Bogotá*" (Antagonism and Failure: The History of an Artists Space in Bogotá) and in 2012 he received a Fulbright arts grant. In 2016 he was on the team of curators for the 44th *Salón Nacional de Artistas* and in 2017 he co-curated *Dysfunctional Formulas of Love* alongside Corazón del Sol at the Box in Los Angeles, in association with PST LA/LA. Since the mid-1990s he has been involved with musical projects and groups including El Trinomio de Oro, Don/Nadie, Chicas Águila, Los Polvos and Las Ruinas Telepáticas. He lives and works in Cali.

PROGRAMA C underpins the commitment of MAMM and Celsia to contemporary artistic productions through a series of curatorial endeavors, follow-up procedures, and exhibitions that take place at the Gallery C of the Museum. On the one hand, the program aims to promote and stimulate the production of emergent Colombian artists and, on the other, provide a space for dissemination and enjoyment of the audiences of the most recent artistic practices.



Perforation for the project "Minúscula" (sketch), 2016

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Carrera 44 # 19A - 100 Ciudad del Río, Medellín - Colombia / Phone: (4) 444 26 22 / www.elmamm.org